

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6781
INFO AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L SINGAPORE 5698

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, SN
SUBJECT: PRE-ELECTION WRAPUP

REF: SINGAPORE 5609

1. ELECTIONS CAMPAIGN PROGRESSING WITH MODERATE PUBLIC INTEREST. PAP HAS BEEN SURPRISINGLY RESTRAINED IN ITS ATTACKS ON OPPOSITION, GENERALLY NOT RESORTING TO LOW BLOWS OF PREVIOUS ELECTIONS CAMPAIGNS. OPPOSITION RALLIES ARE VERY WELL ATTENDED, ATTRACTING INTERESTED BUT NOT OVERLY ENTHUSIASTIC AUDIENCIES.

2. MEDIA COVERAGE HAS BEEN FAIRLY BALANCED, EXCLUDING THE BLATANTLY PRO-PAP STRAITS TIMES. THE NEW NATION HAS BEEN RESTRAINED AND MODERATE, THE CHINESE PRESS HAS BEEN LOW-KEYED IN COVERAGE TO THE POINT OF NEAR AVOIDANCE AND THE MALAY PRESS, ALTHOUGH TILTED TOWARD THE PAP, HAS GIVEN MINOR ORIGINAL REPORTING TO THE OPPOSITION CADIDATES. THE RTS (RADIO TV SINGAPORE) COVERAGE HAS BEEN FAIR, WITH HEAVY COVERAGE OF THE WORKERS PARTY.

3. FOREIGN MINISTER RAJARATNAM HAS SURFACED CHARGES OF
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OPPOSITION PARTY FUNDING REMINISCENT OF HIS 1972 SMEARS. ALLUDING TO THE UNITED FRONT'S CANDIDATE MR. SHAMSUDDIN TUNG, A FORMER CHINESE CHAUVINIST EDITOR AND DETAINEE FROM NANYANG SIANG PAU, RAJA STATED "YOU CAN MAKE A SHREWD GUESS AS TO WHERE THE MONEY (FOR THE UNITED FRONT'S CAMPAIGN) CAME FROM AND WHAT IT IS FIGHTING

FOR." THESE REMARKS FOLLOWED RAJA'S USUAL CAMPAIGN PITCH THAT THE PAP'S "REAL OPPOSITION" IS THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF MALAYA.

4. THE ONLY PAP CANDIDATE OPENLY RUNNING SCARED IS DR. TOH CHIN CHYE. DAILY STORIES IN THE STRAITS TIMES OF DR. TOH TOURING HIS CONSTITUENCY, ROCHORE, OR OF HIS COMMENTS ON HIS BARISAN OPPONENT, DR. LEE SIEW CHOH, SEEM TO MIRROR AN APPARENTLY CLOSE CONTEST. RUMORS OF A PAP SPLIT ON CHINESE EDUCATED VS. ENGLISH EDUCATED LINES INVOLVING TOH, PUBLICIZED BY AN ARTICLE IN FEER, HAVE SPARKED MORE RECENT RUMORS THAT TOH IS LARGELY FIGHTING ALONE, WITHOUT MUCH PAP SUPPORT. COMMENT: IT IS PREMATURE TO ASSUME THE VERACITY OF THE STORY OF THE PAP SPLIT DUE TO A LACK OF SUPPORTING EVIDENCE.
HOLDRIDGE

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NNN

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